

1 CHINESE COURT ROBES SHOWN AT THE MUSEUM

An outstanding collection of Chinese court costumes will be the subject of a special display at the Royal Ontario Museum, from April 10th to May 5th. The exhibition will include robes of the Emperors, the last Empress Dowager, and high officials. These costumes, obtained in Peking during the chaotic years centering around the fall of the Empire in 1911, pose some interesting problems for the historical detective. For example, in order to date the robes and place them in their proper time sequence, it is necessary to give close scrutiny to subtle differences in the symbols used in the various reigns.

These silk costumes are gorgeous in colour and simple in line. The student of art will enjoy the details and motives which have appeared also on porcelains, jades and lacquers and other precious objects of the time of the Manchu reign. Their beauty will appeal to all who have been touched by the magic artistry of China.

2 MARCH BIRTHSTONE HAS DEEP SIGNIFICANCE

Persons born in March have as their birthstone the bloodstone, or heliotrope, which is interpreted as a sign of wisdom and valour. This stone, which may be seen at the Royal Ontario Museum, is a variety of quartz and is dark green in color with red spots of jasper scattered throughout. The red spots were said in Christian legend to represent the blood of Christ. The idea has been beautifully utilized in some gems cut from this stone, where the thorn-crowned head of Christ is so placed that the red spots appear as drops of blood trickling down the hair and face of the Saviour. The name "heliotrope" is derived from two Greek words meaning "sun-turning." According to legend, a bloodstone was supposed to impart a reddish hue to the water in which it was placed, so that when the rays of the sun fell upon the water, they gave forth red reflections. From this fancy developed the exaggeration that the stone had the power to turn the sun itself to a blood red and to cause thunder, lightning, rain, and tempest.

Its chief use is as a gem set in signet rings. The largest deposits of this mineral are found in India, with smaller deposits in Siberia and the Hebrides.

3 A UNICORN FOR FIFTY CENTS

The Royal Ontario Museum was recently presented with a long, slender, twisted shaft of ivory which the donor honestly believed was the horn of that fabled creature, the unicorn.

The unicorn was described by Greek philosophers as a small horse but having a white body, red head, blue eyes and a single red, white and black horn in the middle of its forehead.

Our specimen was actually the peculiar, twisted tusk of the narwal, a small arctic whale, often called the sea unicorn. Although it never existed in fact, the unicorn has had a long and persistent life in the public mind, as evinced by heraldry, literature and art. If you don't believe us, examine the next 50c. piece you get. There you will find a unicorn.

4 CANADIAN SONGSTERS RETURN

Among the most conspicuous signs of spring in the realm of nature are the early birds, which begin to cross the southern border of Ontario by March. These are mostly birds which have wintered in the area extending from the Ohio valley to the Gulf states. Although their appearance here varies according to the season, their ultimate arrival is a dependable natural phenomenon associated with the advent of spring.

The horned larks come first, in February followed, in March, by crows, robins, song sparrows, bluebirds, killdeer, redwings, grackles, meadowlarks, Canada geese, marsh hawks, cowbirds sparrow hawks, phoebes, flickers, and great blue herons in approximately that order.

Naturalists at the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology report that about one day is required for them to reach Hamilton from London, 9 days to cover the distance from London to Toronto, 10 days to Ottawa, 12 days to Collingwood, 14 to Sault Ste Marie, 16 to Fort William, and 33 to Cochrane.

An additional influx during April brings the birds which have wintered in central America and northern South America, and the migration reaches its peak in May, with the arrival of the insectivorous birds which have spent the colder months farther south in South America.

The 16 birds which reappear in March augment our permanent residents and winter visitors, and lend colour and music to a landscape that has been particularly quiet throughout the long months of winter.

5 AN ORCHID FOR THE MUSEUM

"If for any reason you can't send the books, just keep the two dollars as a donation. I got the worth of it last summer. I only had about five hours to spare which was just enough to arouse a terrible appetite." This pat on the back was part of a letter recently received by the Royal Ontario Museum from an out-of-town visitor.

We should add, in the fashion of the advertisers of patent medicines, that the above testimonial was unsolicited.

6 AS DEAD AS THE DODO

The dodo has almost become a myth or a symbol. But there was a bird of that name—a large flightless relative of the pigeons, which inhabited the island of Mauritius until 1690. At that time it became totally extinct, due to the attacks of hogs which had been introduced into the island by Europeans. In the Royal Ontario Museum there is a skeleton and portrait of the dodo on view. The latter, painted by Dr. L. S. Russell is based on the work of a 17th century artist who had seen the dodo in life.

7 PAINTERS-ETCHERS SHOW AT MUSEUM

Starting March 2nd, the work of the Canadian Painters-Etchers Society will be displayed in the Royal Ontario Museum for a month.

